/53 cont'd/

526 171 As far as I know, there is one kind of recreation popular among the Miao. This is to swing on a rope string, which is usually done in late spring and early summer. The construction and use of the swing among the Miao are similar to that of the Li. It has been described in detail in my previous book, Report on an Investigation of the Li of Hainan Island, and a repetition here is not necessary.

/54/ Chapter VII. Religion, Superstitions, etc.

771 1. Taoist Priests

773 Taoism is the only religion of the Miao. It has greatly influenced their social life. Those who conduct the religious ceremony are the Taoist priests, who are divided into two different groups, the civilian Taoist priests and the military Taoist priests. 775 The pictures and religious texts used by these two groups are entirely different. 776 As I saw during the tso-chai ceremony, the gods worshiped by the civilian group were Li Hsieh Wang, Tsu Kung, Shen Nung, Tou Kung, and others. Those worshiped by the military group were Yü Ch'ing, Shang Ch'ing, T'ai Ch'ing, Shang Yüan, Chung Yüan, Hsia Yüan, Yang Hu, and others. There is a pictorial representation of each god. In general, the gods of the civilian group have large heads and those of the military group have smaller 779 ones. 776 In addition to the gods mentioned above, I have found other names in Taoist classics, which are as follows:

T'an Kuan	Chiu Kuan	Ch'en Shih-wu Kuan
Li Hsin-sheng	Kung Huang	Chia Kuan
Ti Szu	An-t'an Ch'uan	Chiu Niang /The ninth lady/
Younger sister Fu-ch'i	Yü Huang	Lui-chia Min-kuan (Lui Kung)
Ching Chu	Chia Hsien	Tang-nien Wen Chu /The god of the year's plague/

/66 cont'd/

715 Since Taoism has a great influence upon the lives of the Miao,
713 the Taoist priests therefore assume great importance in Miao society. Furthermore, only a man with the qualifications of a Taoist priest has the opportunity to read the classics and receive an education, and thus to acquire specialized knowledge. Consequently, Taoist
534 priests enjoy a higher social status than an ordinary person and with it, many special privileges. Under such circumstances, all families, except those under very poor economic conditions, (the initiation ceremony costs money) always send their sons to be initiated for the Taoist priesthood. The fact that the above-mentioned unweaned child was carried there by his mother shows how anxious the parents are to have their children initiated. /67/

776 2. Names of the Important Gods

There are many gods which are worshiped by the Miao. According to what they told me, the most important gods are the following:

(a) Yü-huang—the greatest god in heaven;
(b) T'u-ti-kung—the greatest god on earth;
(c) Ching-chü-kung—the greatest mountain god;
(d) Hai-lung-wang—the greatest water god.

3. Traces of Totem Worship

771 According to Miao legend, which will be discussed in the next
789 chapter, the dog was their first ancestor; that was their totem.
825 Traces of totem worship still remain in their everyday life. Though
[262] there are dogs in every family, yet they have never killed them for food. They let the dogs die a natural death, or they trade the dogs with the Li people for other commodities. I have observed this kind of transaction. This apparently derives from the old custom
[784] of the totemic society, i.e. "to kill totem animals is taboo." Furthermore, the fact that the seal of the military Taoists was inscribed with an outline of a dog might also have some significance here, which is worth noting. /68/

2:Ling & Ruey--185 E-5 (1933) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5
Central China AF14

/126 cont./

obliterated. There is no longer the need for this kind of system of t'un defense against the Miao. In fact, unrest in the Miao area today is often due to the maladministration of the t'un fields system. The Miao petty officers and the t'un leaders often are oppressive in collecting rent and sometimes are corrupt in their methods, thus causing dissatisfaction and disturbances. In the twenty-sixth year of the Republic /1937/ the Miao rebellion in western Hunan arose because of the t'un land system. It resulted in the burning of t'un granaries and killing of t'un officers. Although the rebellion was pacified only after bloody and expensive campaigns, it is imperative to change the t'un and enter the newly opened or reclaimed land as available for taxation, so as to reach a fundamental solution.

/127/

CHAPTER EIGHT

MAGIC AND RELIGION

The Englishman, Bronislaw Malinowski, has said: "There are no people however primitive without religion and magic. Nor are there, it must be added at once, any savage races lacking either in the scientific attitude or in science, though this lack has been frequently attributed to them. In every primitive community, studied by trustworthy and competent observers, there have been found two clearly distinguishable domains, the Sacred and the Profane; in other words, the domain of Magic and Religion and that of Science." (1) According to the report

1. Malinowski: "Wu-shu K'o-hsüeh yü Tsung-chiao /Magic, Science and Religion/," paper in Science, Religon and Reality by

/127 cont./

121 771 Joseph Needham, translated into Chinese by Li An-che, Wu-shu K'o-hsüeh Tsung-chiao yü Shen-hua, page 1, The Commercial Press.

According to the report

114 771 of the Japanese anthropologist, Torii Ryūzō: "The Miao of today have lost their native religion." (2) This perhaps was due

2. Torii Ryūzō: Miao Tsu Tiao-ch'a Pao-kao, National Translation Bureau's Chinese translation, page 259, The Commercial Press.

to a lack in Mr. Torii's investigation, that it neglected the religion of the Miao. According to the result of the investigations of the writers in western Hunan, the Miao tribe there not only have not lost their religion but also have preserved the magic related to their religion. Furthermore, while they have kept 771 their native religion on one hand, on the other they have been 177 influenced to a small extent by Chinese magical practices. Although the domain of magic has been reduced, we can still find vestiges of its existence. As to the domain of the Profane, or Science, we cannot tell what is native or what has been influenced by the Chinese, due to the high degree of their sinicization.

(1) Religion

776 The Miao do not differentiate between shen /Chinese, 771 "gods," "spirits"/ and kuei /Chinese, "devils," "spirits"/. [177] All are in the sacred domain, and are recognized to have [192] supernatural power; whether they are devils, ancestral spirits, or gods, they are all called "kuei," /kuey/ in the Miao language. In their daily life, whenever a strange phenomenon or an abnormal mien that cannot be controlled or explained

/128 cont./ In recent years,
177 Chinese magical practices have been transmitted into the Miao
771 frontier region, and the Miao also believe in the Chinese shen.
Hence, today there are two kinds of religion in the Miao region.
(1) the Miao religion and (2) the guest religion. (1) Each of

[648]

1. The Miao call the Chinese "guests" and so call the religion transmitted by the Chinese the "guest religion."

these religions has its own sphere and does not conflict with the other in influence, for both are based on animism so they can exist together.

756 The Miao religion and the guest religion each has its own
[177] sorcerer-priests. The Miao sorcerer [paɣ tɛɣ ɕioŋɣ] is commonly called the Miao lao-shih /"teacher"/, and the guest sorcerer [paɣ tɛɣ tsaɣ] called the guest lao-shih.

When the Miao lao-shih performs a minor ritual, for the most part he wears ordinary dress. Only when performing im-
[292] portant sacrificial ceremonies, such as Eating Pigs and Bludgeoning the Ox, do they wear caps and long gowns. His paraphernalia include a bowl of beeswax, a hand bell, a bamboo tube, a short double-edged sword, as well as paper banners and a paper parasol. The guest lao-shih wears a spirit /shen/ hat and a
752 spirit long gown when he presides over important rituals.
177 His paraphernalia include an ox horn, a ritual /"teacher's"/
[292] sword, and a willow kerchief. Both the Miao and the guest sorcerer-priests only perform religious ceremonies. For com-
177 munication with the kuei and shen, for instance to find out, in
791 case of sickness, which kuei is causing the trouble, /129/ and
787 then they have in addition a woman or man magician /lit. "fairies"/ who can travel to the yin world to find out. In
[755] addition, there are diviners to find out about good and ill
* [782] fortune in affairs. To calculate the day of getting sick and to select the date for sacrifice to the kuei, there are the date setters. Except for the Miao lao-shih, the rest of the above-

1 [For an extended discussion of the "guest religion", see category 116, pp 237-297. ANALYST]

/127 cont./

776 with the ability or knowledge within the domain of the profane
771 appears, then they consider it to be the working of kuei /128/
782 This gives rise to fear or hope, prayers or opposition. There is only one method and that is to invoke the assistance of kuei with supernatural powers and offer sacrifices to them.

Although the Miao do not differentiate between shen and kuei, they do believe that there is a difference between good and bad kuei. The good kuei live in the yin/supernatural/world
772 of heaven [ta] piaɣ. The earth, on which people live, is the
776 yang /mundane/ world. They do not have the theory of hell, but they believe that under the earth there lives a different kind of human beings. These people are as big as the little finger and live in houses plaited of mugwort and grass. A
774 human being has soul [pienɣ] and a body [koɣ-ʂʿieŋɣ/. When
828 one dreams it is an excursion of the soul while the body is
753 asleep. When a person is sick and cannot be cured by medicine, then it is said that his soul has been taken away by a kuei. When a person becomes unconscious, his body has been seized by a ku woman. When a man dies, his soul ascends to heaven,
775 and he comes to the realization of death only when he hears the
761 crash of thunder or when a Miao sorcerer comes to search for him. Those who suffer a sudden or violent death, such as from
776 knife or spear wound, or from difficult childbirth, rolling into a gully, or falling into a pit, after death many become evil kuei. They are unable to go up to heaven; they are either immediately reborn into another state of existence and come back to life, or remain in the world to make trouble for people.
776 If a streak of black vapor is seen at night, they consider it the
821 manifestation of a kuei and people cry out, "[pɛɣ tsʿəɻ]"
789 (meaning "drive away"), to expel them. The Miao for the most part believe that all natural phenomena have kuei as their controlling power. Hence the wind has a wind kuei [kueŋɣ
824 ʂoɣ] and trees, tree kuei [kueŋɣ nduʌɣ]. When there is a
782 violent storm with wind, thunder, and rain, they must burn
237 beeswax in order to honor the kuei. What has been stated above are the native beliefs of the Miao. In recent years,

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/193 cont./

*782 the chanting are over, the gong and drum are silenced, and the sorcerer-priest returns to the host's house to eat breakfast. After breakfast the sorcerer makes a liang-yüan, and with both hands he gives it to the host to be stuck in the sheng of rice. At the same time he says a few words of good luck.

At this point, all the various rituals for Huan No Yüan are over. The sorcerer packs up his implements and the thank-you gifts from the host, who sends someone to escort him home. On passing each village the sorcerer must blow his horn once, the idea being to call the yin troops to return to the altar. When he arrives home he blows his horn once more and utters the incantation of returning to the altar.

(2) Magic

● 771 789 Both magic and religion are in the sacred domain. The distinction between the two sometimes is not very clear. The celebrated British scholar of magic and religion, Sir James Frazer, set up his standard of differentiating between magic and religion on the basis of whether the method employed in controlling nature was a personal, direct application of the use of spells and charms, or an indirect one by invoking the help of spirits. (1) The former is /194/ magic, and the latter

1. See Malinowski: Magic, Science and Religion, Li Anche's translation, pp. 3-4.

is religion. The contemporary scholar, Malinowski, has made a more penetrating distinction between the two. He says: "Within the domain of the sacred, magic as a practical art consisting of acts which are only means to a definite end expected to follow later on; religion as a body of self-contained acts being themselves the fulfillment of their purpose." (1)

1. See above-quoted Malinowski, p. 110.

/194 cont./

771 Thus, on the basis of what Frazer and Malinowski have said,
789 we can clearly distinguish between Miao magic and religion.
For example, in the event of a drought, formerly the Miao
[931] would ask their sorcerer-priest to catch the dragon in order to
[782] seek rain, but now they offer sacrifices to the thunder kuei in
[821] order to seek rain. The former is magic, and the latter is religion, because catching the dragon to seek rain is the work of a magician to get power, by ritual and incantation, to directly control nature: whether the end is reached or not, whether it will rain or not, is the responsibility of the magician. Offering sacrifices to the thunder kuei to seek rain requires
[776] only the completion of the necessary prayer and ritual: whether there will be rain or not lies within the power of the spirits and beyond the reach of man. After having studied the various kinds of rituals for sacrifices to the kuei in the foregoing sections, we can see that the magic of the Miao in Hunan has largely progressed to the realm of religious acts, magic itself having lost its practical value, but religion still carries with it some imprints of magic. Therefore, the religion of the Miao in Hunan may be called magical religion. But aside from magical religion, there is still preserved a small amount of pure magic. As stated above, magic is a practical technique, and so the magic now still preserved among the Miao in Hunan has its practical value. The magic of controlling nature, such
[993] as rain and wind, animals and vegetables, no longer exists today, except in their folk tales, where traces of it may still be found. The magic now preserved by the Miao may be divided
[755] into two kinds: 1) hua shui /drawing water/, which is a form
[754] of white magic used to cure sickness; 2) fang ku /letting go insects/, which is a form of black magic used to make people sick.

3: Moninger E-5 (no date) 1921 AE5 Miao AE5

583 585 [591] The young people are married at seventeen or eighteen, and it seems to make no difference whether the young couple live with the groom's parents, the bride's parents, or set up housekeeping in their own home. The wedding is usually held at the groom's home, two or three young girls and a young man or two from his village going for the bride and escorting her back. The bride wears no distinctive dress except a peculiar headdress under her kerchief, and an embroidered girdle of undyed cloth. She also carries two small towels of this same material thrown over her shoulders, and one to cover her face. According to their custom, the bride and groom sit on the same bench and eat and drink together, and then declare their allegiance to the family by serving tea to the parents or in some other simple way.

• 771 [797] The Miao in their heathen state apparently worshipped any and all gods in an effort to appease them but with little definite idea or set ritual. Idols do not seem to be in evidence in their houses, and being a roving people, they have no temples. They have within the last few years become interested in the Gospel and whole villages have become Christian, much as has been the case in the mass movement, so-called, in India. They are a simple people, highly emotional and temperamentally religious, which is often true of hill peoples. Thus certain emotional phases of religion immediately become paramount in their eyes, and without careful teaching they are liable to be led astray on these points.

797 [2,2] The Miao have no written language of their own, but pick up Chinese character with amazing rapidity. The Christian villages each put up a chapel at their own expense, meet every morning for prayer before they go to their work, and every evening for a short service and an hour or so of study. When a Chinese evangelist or a missionary comes to the village, they study until midnight, when they are sent home in self-defence by the teachers—and at 2 a.m. they are up pounding rice, so that we wonder when they sleep. They are a wonderfully interesting people, these "Children of the Forest," as they style themselves, and it is a rare privilege to be among them and come to know them.

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

as in their homes, they could entertain kinsmen who had come in to market. 265

Associations. As far as I could determine, the Cowrie Shell Miao had no associations. 575

Religious Institutions. The Cowrie Shell Miao had no formally organized religious communities. They did, however, have religious specialists, including priests. These were the men who performed certain ritual acts, though at other times they were just like other members of the community. Like all other members of the community they were farmers, heads or younger members of families, taking part in the usual economic activities of family and village. As priests they did not take the lead in rites of intensification such as calendric feasts and bullfights, as these were family concerns, and the head of the family presided. However, they had a definite part to play in childbirth, preservation of the good fortune of the house and village, death and burial, and the initial acts of a bullfight and the cyclical sacrifice. Rarely was a priest called in in case of illness; usually a shamaness was asked to perform her ritual in such circumstances. There were at least six priests and three shamanesses in the village. In one case a Taoist priest from Kou-ch'ang was asked to conduct his ritual in behalf of a sick woman. This consisted of chanting and shaking his pieces of iron and clappers as he moved about in a loose-jointed manner. In another instance a woman from a different village came to perform in behalf of a sick child. 793 791 771

Once in the village and once in Lung-li, I saw something which the head of our family told me was "Our P'u Sa." The Lung-li postmaster, a native of the province, said it was "a country superstition," not believed in by the Lung-li Chinese. *P'u Sa* is the Chinese word for Buddha and is often loosely used, as here, just for "deity." A man came to the village with a little red, wooden house on a bamboo pole which he set up before each house in turn, much as the priest and his assistants went from house to house "to bring good fortune." I did not find out whence he had come. The little house could stand firmly without support. The man stood beside it and chanted in Miao, beating the side of the house as he did so, and a gong suspended below the shrine 778 788

174 the earth", fit only to be their helots and serfs. Shy and timid, and always surrounded by these more powerful neighbours, the Miao had lost the power to assert themselves, and content to be serfs, they tilled the land of their lairds whose chattels they had become. It was as though the thick mists, which settle on the tops of the mountain ranges in the out-of-the-way places where the Flowery Miao dwell, had fallen upon their hearts and minds so that they could scarcely see. They lived in the Slough of Despond.

273 579 Both men and women were much given to drinking, the spirits which they drank being distilled from grain. Festivals, marriages and sacrifices were all occasions for reckless drinking when they seemed to glory in their shame and frequently could be seen helplessly drunk. Some of their drinking bouts would go on for three days and nights when the sounds of drunken revelry could be heard all over the villages.

836 The relation between the sexes was very lax and practically every village or hamlet had its "Flowery House", where the boys and girls spent their nights together. Many a young mother did not know who was the father of her child, and it has been said that at one time no girl over the age of fourteen was still a virgin.

771 Their religion was a kind of Animism. The spirit world is as real to them as the living world, though there appears to be no trace of what we may call the greater gods. In a vague way they believed in the transmigration of souls, and they certainly

worshipped the spirits of their ancestors. Mountains, sacred trees, sacred stones and the door are objects of worship. Unlike the Chinese, Flowery Miao have neither temples, shrines nor idols. 771 [341]

The tree cult, ultimately connected with the fertility of the land and the fecundity of the cattle, is extremely elaborate. Each village reverences some local tree (or stone) and should this stand on a higher elevation than the houses which it can, as it were, overlook, it is particularly efficacious. Such a tree is the village guardian. To strip the bark from it or even to break a twig would be sacrilege. 774

No religious ceremony is of more importance than the worship of the door. So highly is the ceremony esteemed that children are never allowed to touch a door to which a sacrifice has been offered. The ceremony itself recalls some features of the Passover Feast. A sorcerer may determine a propitious day for the sacrifice, but he is never permitted to attend the ceremony. The head of the household acts as priest; no mention of the rite is made to neighbours and only members of the family are allowed to be present. 796 782

This is the usual procedure. Towards the close of day, the very dirty house is swept clean. At dusk, the door is closed, after which, until daylight on the following morning, no one may enter or depart. A young female pig is held close to the door; its throat cut, and the blood drained into a hole under the jamb on which the door is hung. The bristles and blood, and the [356]

6:Ch'eh--1 E-5 (no date)1942 AE5 Miao AE5

Religious Beliefs of the Miao and I Tribes in An-shun, Kweichow

[101] 771

An-shun is a center of the Miao and I tribes in Kweichow province, where there are two Miao tribes, the Ch'ing /green/ Miao and the Hua /flower/ Miao, and one I tribe, the Chung-chia. Although there are various groups of Miao-I with different customs, from the point of view of religious beliefs they are all polytheists. In recent decades due to contacts with the Chinese people a portion of the Chung-chia have been assimilated. Besides setting up family altars and worshipping ancestors, they believe in Kuan-yin /goddess of mercy/, Confucius, Kuan-kung /a deified hero of the 3rd century, sometimes called the god of war/ and other gods. The Catholics and the Protestants have also exerted in recent years a strong latent influence on the Miao and I villagers.

The following is a brief study of the religious development and beliefs of the Miao-I tribes.

/89/ The Catholic church in the city of An-shun is known as Shan-tsung T'ang /hall of goodness/ with four branch halls at Kung-pu, Mo-wan-tung, Shui-tang-chai and Ch'iu-chow. They all hold properties which are yearly on the increase. It is said that the Catholic Church at An-shun was established by a certain French priest some fifty years ago. Today, it is administered by Lengkuohsien /transliterated/ and Chailiszu /transliterated/, both French, and the expenses for maintaining it comes from the Catholic headquarters in Kweiyang. The church maintains an elementary school, studying chiefly the Bible, and the enrollment is about from 30 to 40 boys from Catholic families. Within the hsien district there are about 2000 Catholics, one-half of them being the Chung-chia people. [162]

797

an enlightened person among the Miao. His religious fervor, however, was a little too excessive, and it disqualified him as a true leader of his people. He preached among them for more than twenty years with great success, but since he and his foreign associates had left the church, no one succeeded them as a full time preacher. The church school has been closed down. There are only two American doctors in the hospital, having charge at the same time of the church, but they have no time for preaching. So the faith of the Miao and I in Protestant Christianity is also on the decline.

Besides the Catholic Church and the China Inland Mission, the Seventh Day Adventists have recently established a church in An-shun to spread the Christian principles but rather on a small scale. At present the work is carried on by a young man of the Hua Miao tribe, named Tang Chen-ying, with about thirty members equally divided among the Chinese and Miao-I, and a church school of over ten Miao children.

The Miao and I in An-shun are largely uneducated and superstitious, believing strongly in ghosts and evil spirits. All their daily and farm activities, trading, sickness, marriage and funeral events are subject to the influences of the spirits.

The following are some examples:

(1) Spiritual Media. The names for spiritual media in An-shun are the same in the Miao-I language as in the Chinese. The men are known as Kwei-shih or Tuan-kung; the women, Mi-la or Mi-pu. Their duty is to sacrifice to the spirits to invoke their aid and to provide a medium between the spiritual and the human worlds. As such they are respected by the people. All ancestor worship and funeral events have to be presided over by the Kwei-shih. Every

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

the presence of a foreigner, converts and inquirers are ready to talk about and explain things frankly to the missionary. It must be remembered that some of these Miao tribes have been widely separated in time and space, so that what may truly be said of some of them may not be true of all. And here it may as well be admitted that we who have been so much among them have yet a good deal to learn, and possibly something of what has been learned has not been properly understood. But the religious ideas and practices of a new people, for the Miao are a new people to many of our readers, are always interesting, so we shall now put down what we have learned, or think we have learned, about them.

And first let it be said that, as far as our own observation goes, the Miao have no idols and do not worship any gods. We have heard of idols among the Miao, but cannot remember ever to have seen them. They have no temples and no priests, and we never saw them engaged in any act of adoration. They are certainly not Buddhists. They practise certain rites in reference to the dead or to demons, such as a stranger might naturally suppose were acts of divine worship, but they are not acts of divine worship as the term is generally understood.

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

771 From the earliest times the Chinese have known and worshipped *Shang-ti* as the Supreme Being, and have also worshipped inferior local deities. Many of the Miao have been living in close touch with the Chinese for ages, and some of them, as at present, have intermixed much with the Chinese, but, as far as we know, they have not copied the Chinese in their earlier worship of Shang-ti, or in their later worship of Buddhist and Taoist idols.

Most of the Chinese now say they worship Heaven and Earth, and the Miao, when asked about their objects of worship, will sometimes say they worship Heaven and Earth. This, we think, they have learned to say from the Chinese, and learned to say recently. We have often seen the Chinese worshipping Heaven and Earth, and though we have been in and out among the Miao now for fifteen years, we never saw them worshipping Heaven and Earth or any other object. Little shrines may sometimes be seen at the entrance to their villages, but this building of shrines is said to be a recent innovation. We have frequently seen them sacrificing animals and making offerings to the dead, but we never saw them worshipping at a shrine. After years of intercourse and inquiry among them, we are of opinion that those

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

who are not Christians do not pray to or worship any Supreme Being. 771

This is the more remarkable as they have the story of a Creation. The Heh Miao say Vang-vai made heaven and earth, and Zie-ne made other things, but they never worship Vang-vai or Zie-ne. The Hua Miao say that in the beginning there was no heaven and earth. There was a man named Gloe-an, and his wife Ngo-a, and these had two sons. The elder, beating about with a brass hammer, made forty-eight heavens, or a heaven in forty-eight parts. The younger son, with an iron hammer, beat about and made earth in forty-eight compartments. We never heard of them worshipping these persons. 773

All the Miao have musical festivals once or twice a year, now in one part of the country and now in another. If asked why they hold these festivals, they say that if they failed to do so their harvests would be bad; and yet they do not profess to understand how the harvests are influenced by this custom. If ever there was a religious element in their musical festivals, there does not seem to be anything religious about them now. As at present conducted they are fêtes, attended by the people from all the countryside, at which there is not 796 527

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

771 THE MIAO AND, WE THINK, ALL THE OTHER RACES of Eastern Asia ought to be reckoned as Animists. The Chinese may call themselves Confucianists and Buddhists, but they are also Animists. It is conceivable that in a short time many of them will profess to be Agnostics and Materialists, but they will also be Animists. For all the peoples of Eastern Asia the world is full of immaterial powers and intelligences, ever certain rocks and trees are possessed of some sort of spiritual efficacy. Among the Miao these spiritual beings are demons and always inimical to human kind.

771 At first we were inclined to think that the 755 Miao worshipped demons, but when again and again they denied this, and seemed unfeignedly amused at the idea of worshipping demons, we concluded that we were mistaken. The performances they go through, which seem to us like religious rites, are done to drive away or keep away the demons, and to counteract their evil influences. If a man is ill, or his cattle sick, if he has had bad luck, or any misfortune befalls him, he attributes this to demons; and a wizard or exorcist is summoned. Their modes of procedure are various, but might generally be summed up as offerings, unintelligible mutterings, and the throwing about of rice water and 755 knives in every direction. They also believe

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

538 773 clear whether the two stones were two round pieces of a stonegrinder or not. The Ch'uan Miao assured me that they were not two round pieces of a stone grinder but merely two round stones and that they rolled down from opposite hill-or mountain-sides, the opposite sides of a canyon.

Another kind of legend is that which gives an explanation for Ch'uan Miao customs. There are many of them and not a few of the customs here described were first learned about in a legend. As an illustration I will tell the story of the origin of raising chickens.

A man was walking through the woods. A pheasant flew out cackling and the man found some pheasant chicks. These he took home and fed and gradually they became very tame and grew up as pets. The family liked them so much that they did not kill them and eat them. When these chicks grew up they laid eggs and hatched out more chicks which in turn grew up. This family gave some of the fowl to other families and gradually people learned to raise chickens.

538 837 There are many love songs or songs that relate the experiences of lovers, for the Ch'uan Miao have had their share of Romeos and Juliets. Some of these songs tell of love between men and their wives or between men and women whom they love and wish to marry, but probably ninety percent of the love songs tell of love affairs between married men and women who are not their wives or between married women and men who are not their husbands, or between unmarried people who do not expect to get married, and in nearly all of these cases it is stated or implied that there was sexual intercourse between them. It seems to be assumed that love between the sexes will result in sexual intercourse and the pure love song that plays such a large part in the literature of the world is hard to find.

IX. RELIGION AND WORLD VIEW

771 In my opinion the Ch'uan Miao are a very religious people, but they have no religious organization, no images of gods, and no temples. Through their daily toil, by the help of their ancestors and the gods, and through their religious ceremonies, they hope to achieve a satisfying life in which the basal needs of food, sex, protection or security, and play and amusement are satisfied. Two of the fundamentals in the Ch'uan Miao religion are belief in demons which cause disease and other calamities and for whose exorcism ceremonies are required, and the ancestral cult with its ceremonial offerings and commemoration.

[11 cont.]

764 [177] On the third day comes "fa-sang" [burial]. In former times the body was wrapped in a straw mat, but now it is laid in a coffin. This is the result of Chinese influence and practiced by those who live near the Chinese. At the time of burial, a small tree of about ten feet long is split in two, its bark peeled off and the two ends tied with ropes. The corpse is then placed on it and carried away on the shoulders. When the procession leaves the house the filial son walks in front, followed by the women mourners, whose long, show laments and plaintive cries are too sad to hear. Arriving at a mountain spot they dig the earth [12] to make a well, the four walls of which are lined with stone slabs. Into the well the coffin is lowered. If the body is wrapped in a straw mat, its two sides are left empty. On the top of the well more stone slabs are laid and then some earth. The tombs are all laid crosswise, hence the expression, "hêng Miao, tao Ch'i-lao [crosswise Miao and upside down Ch'i-lao]. After burial the guests all return to their respective homes.

766 777 [801] The Miao are superstitiously prejudiced against repeat figures in the age of the deceased, such as 22 or 33, believing that these figures would cause the dead to receive extra punishment in the spirit world and at the same time bring bad luck to the family. To overcome this mishap they jack up the coffin in some deep mountain, without letting it touch the earth on the theory that in so doing the spirit of the dead would not be admitted that year to the spirit world. In similar instances the Ch'ing Miao, whose dead is wrapped up in a straw mat, would hang the corpse high up on some lofty cliff in some wild area without letting it touch the earth to avoid damnation.

5. Culture

796 [771] 1) Religion. There is strictly no religion to speak of among the Miao-I in Kweichow. After living in the mountain village, they have come to respect the forest behind it, which they call [782] "hou lung" [back dragon] and once every spring they offer sacrifice to the mountain forest. After the sacrifice they

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Miao AE5
Shan-Thai AL3

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

Besides the Meos' predilection for mountain tops they have other claims to distinction. They are utterly independent and quite fearless. Their passion for freedom compels them to live in the smallest of villages and, apart from such rare events as the invasion of 1860, they will not tolerate chiefs or leaders. If forcibly brought to lower altitudes they are soon taken ill and die. They are normally pacific, but if compelled to fight are apt to eat the livers of slain enemies. M 181

The Meos are the only people in Indo-China who are not in the slightest concerned with evil spirits, although they admit their existence. Their complete indifference to all the ghouls and devils that plague the races surrounding them has invested them with enormous prestige, which they are careful to cultivate. They like to encourage the belief, prevalent among the Thais, that they are were-wolves and can turn into tigers at wish. They have no funerary cults but celebrate a funeral – or any other event providing the slightest excuse – with orgies of drinking. Husbands and wives keep their own property. Children are given the greatest degree of freedom; and sexual promiscuity before marriage – even with strangers – is general. 'Sacred groves' exist – there is a celebrated one at Dong-Van in Tonkin – to which Meo girls resort, and offer themselves freely to all comers. It is said that large-scale maps, upon which the locations of such groves have been scrupulously plotted, are the prized possessions of most French garrisons in Tonkin. Besides breeding fine, white dogs, they are experts at taming monkeys and birds, particularly a kind of minah which they teach a wide repertoire of imitative sounds. The Meos will only part with their animals for an enormous price – payable in solid silver which they immediately convert into massive jewellery. M 771 M 836 M 231 435

But the first village beyond Muong Kassy, perched on a bare hill-top and reached laboriously up a long winding path, proved not to belong to Meos but the 'black' Thais – so called from the distinctive dress of their women. It was like climbing up to an eagle's eyrie and finding crows in possession. A rare species of crow though. Check- ST 361

[168 cont.]

764 which includes the relatives and friends, set off firecrackers and rifle shots. (The "Méo" women do not participate in the funeral ceremonies.) After the body has been placed in the grave, the trench is completely filled in, and above it is built a little mound, often covered with flat stones on which the stretcher is broken that served to carry the deceased. The cortège then returns to the house of death, where the feasts are resumed until the provisions prepared have been exhausted.

No further attention is paid to the dead. In the region of Pha-Long, one of the children of the deceased brings a little food to the grave for two or three days immediately after the funeral, and that is all. (Photos 198 and 199, Plate 42, represent the funeral of a rich "Méo" who was "ly-truong" of the commune of Pha-Long. Except in the matter of the coffin, made in this case with great care of unrottable planks, in the Chinese manner, the ceremony was just as simple as for a poor "Méo.")

765 Mourning is marked by the wearing of a white turban.

The "Méo," properly speaking, have no religion and evince
● 771 the same spirit of independence toward the gods as toward man. In the same way, as we have already pointed out, they do not even practice ancestral worship except in the vaguest manner. The ancestral altar consists generally of one or several bands of red paper,
769 glued to a partition in the hall of honor. Below these there is a
778 small table holding a bowl full of sand, into which is stuck, from time to time, a stick of lighted incense.

The worship amounts to a few invocations and the offering of food, when a feast is held in the house.

The "Méo" recognize the spirit of the heavens ("Tô"), of the
776 earth ("Ang"), of the mountains ("sien-chen"), of the thunder ("lu-chen"), of the waters (the dragon "Lông-wâng"), and the spirits of the hearth ("tsao-chen").

The "Méo" are acquainted with the legend of the flood which
773 we have already told: a single couple, brother and sister, surviving the cataclysm, whose incestuous union produced a calabash. The seeds of this calabash gave birth to man kind.

That which especially characterizes the "Méo" is that, al-
776 though they believe in the existence of evil spirits, capable of

158: Diguet--142 G-3 (ca 1895) 1908 AM1 Indochina

Miao AE 5

764

Certain peculiarities relative to funeral ceremonies should be pointed out. The body of the deceased is either stretched out on a cot or fixed to a plank, which in certain tribes is laid out along a partition for three or four days preceding burial. The body is dressed in its finest garments, from which buttons and fastenings have been removed, so that the soul may leave the corpse more easily. A square of red linen is placed over the lower part of the face and on the mouth. The children offer a feast to relatives and friends. The guests present pigs, goats, and dogs, to the deceased, whose flesh will be served to them at the funeral meals. A dog, also prepared for cooking, is attached to the right hand of the deceased by a paw and is supposed /144/ to guide his wandering foot-steps in the other world. The dead person is borne into his grave on the plank to which he is fixed, and the coffin is constructed in the trench even as among the Man Tien. The family's meal is brought to the grave for two or three days, then it is abandoned completely.

771

The Meo are the most eclectic of the mountaineers in matters of religion and superstition. They have in their homes an altar to the Ancestors. But this piece of furniture is no more than a small plank suspended by two cords along a partition, and on it is a small ash-bowl in which the sticks of incense are placed. They also have an altar just as crude for the worship of the Hearth. They worship Heaven and Earth as dieties, venerate the Buddhist goddess Quan Am as a good Madonna, the Spirit of Thunder and the Dragon, and believe in three human souls like all the peoples of the Far East. Finally, they are much less afraid then the other mountaineers of Evil Spirits and Demons, to whom they are satisfied to attribute the cause of certain diseases. Their sorcerers are not to be distinguished from the rest of the population. They limit themselves to placing a white veil over their face while officiating at ceremonies. All of the festivals, whatever they may be, are accompanied by music, songs, and feasts irrigated with alcohol.

791

AKha A04
Miao AE5

M /73 cont./
883 consider which partner they could marry, and, in short, no longer live only in the present. They are entirely satisfied
M with the way of life prescribed by the sib laws. There are
[578] never any disputes between the generations. On the contrary, the young people treat the older ones with veneration and respect, and it never occurs to them to criticize existing institutions.

M
869 Similarly, their attitude toward religious matters does
755 not change. Since early childhood these matters have played
● 771 a major role in their lives (see the chapter, "Religion and
[883] Magic," the section on "Cult and Taboo"). They have repeatedly seen the shaman drive away evil spirits and believe that in doing so he has freed other children, and perhaps themselves, of these spirits and therefore of sicknesses (see the chapter, "Medicine"). Moreover, they have heard that in case of the death of a child, the shaman was weaker than the evil spirits. They do not doubt for a moment the existence of such spirits, whose activity and effect have been so strikingly and obviously demonstrated, for the death of a child always makes a lasting impression upon his playmates.

A /74/ Things are somewhat different among the Akha.
881 Probably as a result of premature sexual intercourse (see the
[896] section, "Sexual Development," in this chapter), the actual beginning of puberty brings with it only slight psychological changes.

A The pubescent Akha give no thought to the past or the
881 future. They do not criticize, but rather are completely satis-
883 fied with the way the adults regulate life. Similarly there is no criticism among them concerning the traditions and even less about religious matters, which in general do not play
A nearly as decisive a role as among the Meau. An exaggerated
[776] fear of the spirits is as unknown to the adolescents as to the
[781] adults. There is no period of passivity or of intense activity, no withdrawal or shame on the part of girls menstruating for the first time. The pubescent Akha for the most part have long been informed, and they therefore expect the advent of puberty with all the accompanying circumstances. There is no daydreaming or introspection among them. With the increase

39: Bernatzik--216 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
AKha A04
Miao AE5

/155 cont./

A 527 273 "Outside, on the open areas between the houses, the young people begin to assemble. They come hurrying from all directions, light-hearted from the good food and slightly intoxicated from considerable quantities of the rice liquor.

A 535 527 "As we step into the open, the sun is already sinking, but after the gloom of the house we must close our eyes in the piercing light. Here and there mouth organs are heard; the young men practice a little, gather in a circle, and begin to play and to dance even here between the houses. It is amazing how they can maintain the melody during the difficult dance steps, the bending of the body, and the leaps. The girls stand around admiring them and are an appreciative audience for the dancing skill of their ftiends. Little boys join the young men and try to imitate the steps of the adults. Toward sundown it becomes quieter in the village. Gradually the gay young dancers disappear and move to the nearby dancing places, where the girls' dances now begin and with them the moonlight frolics of the Akha young people."

/156/

Chapter 9
Religion and Magic

M 771 776 [114] The religion of the Meau is described by various authors as either a vague belief in spirits with a god of heaven as the chief spirit or, if it is more in harmony with an author's attitude and world view, as a monotheistic religion. Dhuraratsadorn (1), for

1. Page 172.

instance, speaks of "spirits of the clouds and ancestors." Lajonquière (2) reports: "The Meau vaguely worship a god of

2. II, p. 312.

the heavens, 'To,' and a god of the earth, 'Ang,' the spirits of the mountains, 'Sien-Chen,' the spirit of thunder, 'Lu-Chen,' the ancestors, 'Dang,' and the goddess, 'Kouan-Yin,' who blesses human beings and animals, but whose story they do not

/156 cont./

know. They believe in a fantastic mythical animal that lives in the water, the dragon 'Long-Wang,' and, finally, they worship the hearth spirit, 'Tsao-Chen.'" Abadie (3) reports the

3. Page 168.

same almost verbatim, but adds that the Meau actually have no religion at all and manifest an independence toward the deities just as they do toward human beings.

Both authors come to the conclusion that "the Meau do not live in constant fear of invisible evil spirits that are filled with hatred against the human beings. They wander unconcerned through their mountains entirely without prejudice." I, too, was struck by this character trait, especially as a great contrast to the attitude of the Lahu. In other respects, however, the opinion of these authors differs radically from that of the Catholic missionary, Savina (4), who wants to see the god of

4. II, p. 253.

heaven of the Meau /157/ elevated to a high god and, correspondingly, the other spirits reduced to minor spirits without influence, in such a way that then the conceptions of the Meau seem to harmonize very well with those of Catholicism: "The Meau never confuse spirits with God, do not ascribe any divine powers to them, and do not pay homage to them as they do to God."

Maspero takes the opposite view: "The religion of the Meau has been strongly influenced by Chinese Taoism. The native sorcerers are almost the pupils of the Taoist ones. Every family reveres the hearth god, as well as Kouan-yin as the protector of the house. At the beginning of the year sacrifices are offered to heaven and earth, and in the course of the year almost all the great Chinese festivals are celebrated. Moreover, the Meau are familiar with the transmigration of souls. The evil ones are banished into hell, where Ni-wan, the Chinese Ye-wang, presides. There is also a realm of the dead which is similar to the realm of the living."

/157 cont./

771 114 Under these circumstances I deemed it especially important to investigate the religious element of the Meau with the utmost care. I shall deal with the activities of the Christian missions in a special section of the chapter on "Cultural Change and Colonial-Ethnological Problems among the Mountain Peoples in Thailand." Before dealing with the native religious elements of the Meau, I must point out that at first it was difficult to penetrate into the spiritual culture of the Meau. The Meau, to be sure, do not hesitate to perform their incantations and sacrifices in the presence of strangers, but they do maintain secrecy about certain things, especially concerning religion, before persons who do not belong to the community. Chance and some knowledge of medicine helped me probe more deeply into features of the sacral life of the Meau.

123 [753] [774] Lü, the third son of the chief Tsin Tsai, became sick. His father took heart and came to me, bemoaning the fate of his son. According to Meau opinion, his soul had gone wandering and was prevented from returning by evil spirits. The efforts of the shamans had been in vain. I was easily able to [164] determine that the sick Lü had tropical malaria, a fatal sickness for the Meau. I told the chief that many little evil spirits had entered his son's body and were sucking out the red blood. Under /158/ these circumstances it was not surprising that the soul did not dare to return to the body. He should once more ask the shaman to try his incantations, and I, too, would call on my spirits, firmly convinced that our combined efforts would be crowned with success. -- The shaman came and declared himself willing to undertake the experiment. After the ceremony, which I describe in detail in the section, "Magic, Soothsaying, and Interpretation of Omens" in this chapter, I treated the patient for malaria, which cured him of his affliction. Through this I won the sincere gratitude of the chief, and since I had declared that the shaman's assistance was absolutely necessary for the patient's recovery, he, too, was well disposed toward me. Hence everybody supported me in every conceivable way in my investigations, and I was able to penetrate more and more deeply into the spiritual culture of the Meau.

/158 cont./

A M 771 The missionary Telford (1) calls the Akha "perhaps the most superstitious people in the state of Kengtung." According to our experience, the Akha, like all lower agriculturalists, have strong religious ties, but not nearly to the extent that the Meau have, in spite of the fact that the religion of the Akha, like that of the Meau, is definitely ancestor and spirit worship.

1. Page 98.

a) Ideas about Death and the Soul

M 761 776 The Meau regard sickness as well as the activity of evil spirits as causes of death. In their view, it may happen that in clearing land for a new rice field a tree in which a spirit dwells may be felled. Now the latter is angry at the human being who robbed him of his dwelling and kills him. Even if one should visit a spot in the forest which happens to shelter a spirit the latter regards this as a disturbance and seeks revenge on the intruder. It is therefore not surprising that a female shaman whose three sons had been the victims of an epidemic became convinced that she had built her house on a spot inhabited by an evil spirit who had taken revenge for it.

M 774 The Meau believe in an immortal soul, plī, which can have many shapes and leaves a sleeping human being in order to /159/ wander about invisibly. This causes dreams, for the M [753] [776] [761] [755] experiences of the wandering soul become known to the sleeper in the dream. It generally returns to the body when the person awakens, but it may also happen that evil spirits hold the soul in captivity and prevent it from returning to the body. Then illness occurs, and if incantations are of no avail, death follows.

M 774 775 614 Every person has a soul. If a person dies, his soul is reborn in the next child of the family or the sib. Souls have no sex, for it does not matter what sex the next child of the sib is; even distinguished men may thus be reborn in the body of a girl. Accordingly, there is no judgement of good and evil human beings in the other world; the soul has nothing to expect other than that it will be reborn as soon as a new child of the